

The Western Seminary Bulletin

REFORMED CHURCH IN AMERICA

VOL. VIII, NO. 3

HOLLAND, MICHIGAN

DECEMBER, 1954

American Protestantism and the Fear of Communism

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The typical American Protestant can be accused today of no heresy with regard to his attitude toward communism. He has rejected it with a certainty that is emphatic. He knows that his national safety, his economic security, and his moral and religious certainties are jeopardized by the tyranny of godless communism. His conviction of the evil of communism is in part based upon the belief that there are fundamentally two sets of people in the world today, first, those who do, second, those who do not, recognize the existence of God and an objective moral law. He unhesitatingly places himself in the former category and the communist in the latter. The communists are the bad men and those who oppose communism are on their way toward being good men. His attitude is grounded further in the belief that material abundance in America and material scarcities in communist countries constitute ample proof of the superiority of our way of life over that espoused by the communists. He is convinced that the atheism of communism is the core of its evil and that a simple belief in God and Americanism is the path that leads around all pitfalls and eventually unto salvation. The divine stamp of approval, he feels, can hardly be withheld from the people who adhere to virtuous beliefs in their religion, politics, and economics.

This unambiguous resistance of American Protestantism to communism has, of course, adequate rational basis. It has stemmed from the suspicion that the communist movement in every country has acted as the instrument of an international conspiracy, directed from Moscow. Communism is a power movement as well as a political ideology and it poses a threat to cherished values in our American heritage. The existence in our own land of a disciplined communist party which is committed to achieving objectives received from Moscow gives justifiable cause for vigilance and concern. The possibility of subversive activities by this disciplined branch of the party places us, quite naturally, on the alert. It is necessary to take some measures to protect ourselves against the possible violence instigated by this radicalism.

On the other hand, during the past several years rational resistance to communism in America has degenerated into something much less than rational and hardly more than hysterical. There has been an irrational exaggeration and inflation of the fear of internal communism. This exaggeration has had the effect of diverting our attention from the genuine danger of external communist aggression to a preoccupation with the internal communist problem when that problem is less serious than at any time since the 1930's.¹ It is im-

portant to stress the last statement because it is seldom remembered today. During the 1930's there might have been some intellectual communism. There were several reasons for this. Staring us in the face was the fact of the Great Depression. During those years our economic structure seemed to be tottering and the New Deal measures of Franklin Delano Roosevelt seemed to give only shaky support to a system that was about to collapse. It did appear at that time as if the collapse of capitalism from its own internal contradictions was approaching and that the Marxian thesis had some sense to it after all. Drastic changes were the need of the hour and to many sensitive people it did not seem as if the old economic machine could simply be repaired and kept running. Moreover, there was the threat of a rising fascism in Europe with a totalitarianism as fanatic and pagan as anything that had yet appeared. A number of individuals had a greater fear of fascism than communism inasmuch as the latter was dealing with a problem which the West has not seriously attempted to solve. In addition, some of the moral idealism of communism was clearly derived from Christian sources. There was a second period, this one during the 1940's, when communism seemed to present less of a threat than fascism. This was the period during which we were at war with the fascists and during which we found ourselves allied with Soviet Russia in the defeat of the Axis Powers. The foregoing considerations should always be taken into account before we judge any of our fellow citizens to be guilty of disloyalty or treason for intellectual or emotional attachment to communist ideals twenty years ago. Much near-hysteria of the last several years has resulted from the erroneous assumption that communism presents the same appeal now that it held twenty years ago. This simply is not the case. As the spectre of the communist power movement has revealed its true colors during the postwar era and particularly during the intensified cold war, all but a small handful of erstwhile communist supporters have been progressively disillusioned and internal American communism has lost much ground. The greatest danger to our country and to American Protestantism today is certainly not *internal* communism.

Communism is to be rejected. As Protestant Americans we know that today as never before. The question of discriminating between the good and the evil in communism has frequently been debated and it has sometimes been thought possible to accept the good and reject the bad, that is, to execute a kind of sifting process with respect to the total manifestations of the movement. This question can no longer be seriously

The Western Seminary Bulletin

PUBLISHED QUARTERLY
UNDER THE DIRECTION OF THE
FACULTY OF THE SEMINARY
HOLLAND, MICHIGAN

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raised and discussed. We have been driven to a more total rejection of the whole movement. Tempting though it may be to strive to discriminate between the black and the white in communism, we should still not be deflected from an attitude of total rejection of it. It seems more than ever impossible today for a Protestant Christian to be partly for communism and partly against it. The alleged good in Marxism has usually turned out to be a wedge for its evils. Although the professed goals of communism are alluring enough to enable it to win support in particular places, sooner or later a totalitarian political system gains the upper hand and dominates the scene.

Even though it is evident that communism is to be rejected, American Protestants are not relieved of the responsibility of analyzing their fears of communism. Such analysis can aid in removing fear and in creating an attitude that will bear none of the marks of an irrational phobia. It is important to note here that any number of people confuse Christian opposition to communism with opposition to communism as an economic system. They overlook the fact that Christianity has little quarrel with communism simply as an economic system. There is no "Christian economics." Christianity has shown itself to be capable of surviving the rise and fall of several forms of the economic organization of society. The type of capitalism that was flourishing seventy-five years ago is in its death throes today. Christianity has no such sickness unto death; on the contrary, it gives evidence of remarkable vitality. Christianity does not identify itself with, nor does it depend for its life upon, the existence of a particular economic system. It may flourish or flounder in a variety of relationships and amidst a diversity of types of economic systems. Christians oppose communism for more basic reasons than the heterodoxy of its economic dogmas.

Unfortunately, this confusion has penetrated much farther than a mere inability to understand the real grounds on which Christian opposition to communism is based. Much popular confusion in the Protestant mind recently has resided in the fact that the distinction between certain ideas of economic institutions and the relationships of these institutions either to international

communism or American democracy has been obscured. For example, a man is not automatically tainted with socialism because he favors government restriction of monopolistic practices that undermine free competition. The democratic ideal of equality of opportunity for all may call for such governmental control and restriction. It may be quite undemocratic in a given instance for a man *not* to press for government curtailment of economic practices. This has nothing to do with international communism. But the American Protestant has been prone to label any governmental form of interference with the freedom of his economic life as socialistic or communistic. He forgets that effective restriction upon dominant economic power may be necessary in the interest of greater justice in his society. We are not writing a brief for the concentration of power in the hands of the government or for a planned economy. We are trying to indicate the dangers to our democracy that ensue from casting the finger of suspicion at those who do not conform to a given economic and political ideology. In such instances the right of honest dissent is endangered and basic American democratic processes are jeopardized. This is precisely what has happened during our recent past. It has stemmed from those who resist peaceful and needful economic change and who insinuate that nonconformity to their ideology must be directly or indirectly related to international communism. The threat to our democracy from this source is obvious.

If Christian opposition to communism is not made on the basis of its economic system necessarily, what are the Christian grounds for rejecting communism? Why has communism become such an evil that Christians are bound to oppose it? A number of reasons for Christian resistance are herewith presented. First, the communist movement represents a monopoly of power in the hands of a few. This monopoly of power is ostensibly justified on the basis that the few who possess the power represent the interests of the masses of people, the proletariat, and that the exercise of this power will become unnecessary when the classless society is realized. The dictatorship of the proletariat is a necessary, transitional phase in the inexorable process of dialectical materialism. Christianity, with its realistic view of human nature, warns against such a monopolizing of power. Lord Acton was right when he wrote that all power tends to corrupt and that absolute power corrupts absolutely. Modern political democracy places a check on disproportions of power by diffusing this power as widely as possible. Through the movement toward universal suffrage, it places a portion of potential political power in each individual's hands. The narrowing of power in the Marxist-Lenin movement into the hands of a few has perhaps been inevitable; it appears also as if it will have the consequence that those who have gained the power will not willingly surrender their power even though their goals be realized. The possessors of power usually find reasons why they should retain their power.

Second, there is the utopian illusion of communism. Communist culture is a secular, utopian religion. Communism is a secularized version of the Christian hope of the Kingdom of God on earth. The sweep of the historical dialectic will finally result in the withering away of the state and the ushering in of the classless

society. Just as Christian visionaries have anticipated the dawn of the new day when the reign of God will be visibly effected on earth, Communist ideologists await the advent of the classless society when inequalities will be no more and a kind of brotherhood will be achieved. Like Christianity, communism has its own fall, saints, scriptures, and church. The communist view of history is certainly a vulgarization of the Biblical hope of history. Both Christianity and communism take history seriously, more seriously than the rationalism that is derived from Greek sources. The utopian illusion just described makes the communist the conscience of civilization. As a young student from an East German university said on one occasion: "We are the doctors of the human race." The utopian dream of communism accounts for at least a measure of its fanaticism.

A third evil of communism can be traced to its absolute class distinction. Society is divided into ultimate, absolute classes, the capitalists and the proletariat, the exploiters and the exploited, the master and the slave. Pretensions of virtue are found within the capitalist class but real virtue resides within the proletariat. The proletariat is the absolutely virtuous group and all others use their pretensions of morality as a front behind which to pursue their own interests. This kind of categorical class distinction gives to communism a furious self-righteousness. The claim to perfection of the communists has the same effect as the self-justifying power of the Nazis. In either case the Christian doctrine of creatureliness is outraged. Pretensions of virtue and possession of power add up to a vicious combination. Christianity fails to find such a coincidence of goodness and power in any individual, let alone in any social class. The coincidence of power and goodness is discoverable, in fact, in God alone.

The next illusion of the communists is their pretension of mastering history. According to this dogma, man can outgrow his creatureliness and become a pure creator. Engels used to insist that whereas the bourgeois scientists wanted only to master nature, the communists desire to master both nature and history. They would assume a control over the historical process which Christianity rightly limits to God himself. In declaring themselves sovereign to history, they are playing a role which, according to Christianity, is denied to any man, class, or civilization. The forbidden role is that of playing God to human history.

Finally, the communist movement is featured by an absolute dogmatism. It claims to have the truth, the only truth, and nothing but the truth about nature and history, about the ways of man and the ways of the world. Theirs is the only true philosophy, science, and understanding of history and religion. Their atheism is dogmatic. These absolute pretensions are made by absolute rulers who also perform the function of teaching. The rulers who possess the power are the teachers who claim to control the truth. This absolute dogmatism naturally results in a fierce intolerance towards those who are opposed to communism.

The foregoing remarks provide evidence of several of the evils of communism. These evils have been inherent in the movement from its inception and are in part responsible for the corrupting of what began as a protest against glaring social and economic injustices in western civilization. Communism has become a nightmare. It is a

fanatical phenomenon, a secularized religious faith, and one that is saturated with illusions. Its performance has not been up to its promises. Based upon a terrible self-righteousness and the possession of almost unparalleled power, the movement has resulted in Soviet Russia in a political totalitarianism and a tyrannical absolutism that have suppressed democratic liberties, ignored God, and outraged the dignity of human beings created in the image of God. It is right that Protestant America should resist this scourge. Christian opposition to a power movement of these proportions is inevitable.

These aspects of communism, justifying a legitimate concern as they do, tend to blind our eyes to a sober fact. Communism is a judgment upon the western world and the western churches. This affirmation must not become just a pious cliché. The fact is that at the time communism took its rise the Christian Church was out of touch with the masses of people. The churches took little interest in the plight of the laboring man who was rapidly becoming the victim of an industrial revolution that reduced him to the stature of a statistic, of an adjunct to the machine. Communism has claimed to represent the interests of these masses. It has tackled a social problem which many of the churches have not attempted to handle even to this day. Notice the words of Evanston on this matter: "We wish . . . to stress that the growth of communism is a judgment upon our modern societies generally for past or present indifference to social justice, in which the church is also involved."² Perhaps communism would not have taken an atheistic turn had the churches taken a strong interest in matters of social justice where the masses of working men were concerned. The mid-nineteenth century form of Christianity, both Protestant and Roman Catholic, may thus be responsible for some of the objectionable elements in communism. This probability we must acknowledge without allowing such recognition to lead us to a crippling sense of guilt. Unfortunately, the tyranny of communism has been such as to increase our self-righteousness and to blind us to the degree to which Protestantism itself is responsible for some of the objectionable elements in communism. Actually, there is still good reason to insist that, despite the ruthlessness of communism tyranny, the phenomenon as a whole is a judgment on the church. Surely, with contrition and repentance, we can acknowledge the fact of judgment and, at the same time, continue to oppose the methods of communism.

How shall American Protestantism respond to the challenge of communism? What is the best defense against it? We read criticisms of a purely negative approach to communism. Is it possible to take a positive attitude toward it? Can we approach the problem in a constructive manner? An affirmative answer can be given. For one thing, we can ceaselessly make the effort to understand people in different situations from our own. Many of the world's peoples are in a desperate condition today, so desperate, in fact, that any change for them would be a change for the better. Communism presents an appeal to such people because it makes concrete promises of bettering their condition. When they choose communism, they do so because it seems to be the lesser evil. As Stringfellow Barr has urged us to remember, Problem Number One in the world today is not communism but the prevalence of poverty, misery,

illiteracy, disease, starvation, and despair.³ These people need help on a gigantic scale. Who will give it to them? There is no doubt that church relief agencies have helped to alleviate much misery. But this is not adequate to the total task. Neither are small yearly appropriations from our Congress sufficient. Meanwhile do these people have our understanding? Will we refrain from harsh judgments upon them? If we are not impervious to their cries, some of them in time will work out their own constructive alternatives to communism.

Further, the preservation and widening of democratic procedures in our own country is needed. A democracy that secures the greatest approximations to justice for all groups within our land is a most effective antidote to communism. The goal of equality of opportunity for all calls for realization as much as at any time within our history. We have sometimes represented such equality as an achievement in America when we should have represented it for what it actually was and still is, an ideal possibility and a worthwhile goal to be striven for. Our racial policies have been a blight upon our record. American Protestants can note with satisfaction that slow but genuine progress is being made with regard to our treatment of minority groups. Let not Protestants lag behind Roman Catholic practice or communist profession in elimination of segregation and discrimination!

The preservation of democratic processes lays upon Protestants the responsibility jealousy to guard the civil liberties of all our citizens. Some of the best propaganda for communism that can be conceived stems directly from the undermining of basic democratic liberties in America in recent times. The climate of fear and conformity that has been created in many areas has certainly not been conducive to the upbuilding and strengthening of our democracy. We have been partially discredited in the eyes of the outside world as the result of these tendencies. This atmosphere has had the further result of obscuring the rights of certain of our citizens to the due processes of law. Civil liberties have been endangered. The finger of suspicion has been pointed at those persons who identified themselves with non-communist organizations that were dedicated to the upholding of basic liberties. The invoking of the Fifth Amendment has been construed as almost certain evidence that the person claiming the privilege is a communist. American Protestants would do well to heed the words of Dean Erwin N. Griswold of the Harvard Law School. In an address last winter, Dean Griswold pointed out several types of cases in which the claiming of the privilege of the Fifth Amendment is quite warranted. "In each case, the inference which would be taken from the claim of the privilege would in fact be unwarranted. The claim of the privilege is surely a serious business, but it is equally surely not the equivalent of an admission of criminal conduct . . ."⁴

Again, American Protestants should resist wherever possible what may be called the Machiavellian use of their religion. This involves the process of using Christianity as an instrument to make America secure. The Christian symbols are used and the name of God is invoked because such emphases are seized upon as convenient devices in the upbuilding of our national self-interest. Under this conception the individual's ultimate loyalty is not to God, but to the nation or to some other cause. Men will seek the use of the Christian symbols

as a means to another end, that of protecting the system that has provided us with an unbelievably high standard of living. Patriotism to the nation is placed above loyalty to God. There has been an enormous amount of such an employment of Christianity and it is not difficult to perceive that our religious faith is usually corrupted in the process. Protestant Christians may justifiably criticize the cheap and idolatrous use of religion.⁵

Recall, too, that the maintenance of a pure faith against corroding and corrupting elements is not easily secured. Our American society is not as innocent of unchristian motives as many of its ardent devotees like to believe. And American Protestants are not as objective and disinterested in their economic judgments as we might suppose. Protestantism is in the midst of gigantic secular forces which resist to the utmost any efforts to speak a prophetic word against them. The opinions of American Protestants are moulded as much by these forces as by Christian insights derived from the Holy Scriptures. Add to this the fact that economic and social judgments are subtly warped by self-interest and one can hardly escape the conclusion that American Protestant thinking is strongly tinged by that American secular idealism that holds that all things are possible with man. God is not really needed for the complete life. The need in this scheme for divine grace and guidance is gently but firmly pushed out of the picture. Is it not true that America enthusiastically regards Benjamin Franklin and J. P. Morgan among her heroes but gives only grudging recognition to Cotton Mather and Jonathan Edwards? There is unceasing pressure by certain dominant forces in the press, over the air, and on the screen to secure support for a particular American ideology. One who submits to these pressures is groomed to respond almost automatically to a whole number of issues affecting our public and national life. Even though advocates of this ideology may be correct on one or another particular issue, they succeed in preventing Protestants from becoming aware of the dynamic resources in their own faith for bringing Christian judgments to bear upon public issues.

The substance of this essay has been generated out of the conviction that positive responses to communism are far more effective than vocal fears that are full of sound and fury signifying nothing. American Protestantism will gain little, if anything at all, simply by chiming in with the unremitting clamor against communism at a time when an already uneasy peace barely prevents us from being plunged into a war that might gain us "victory on a heap of ruins," as Sir Winston Churchill has phrased it. A sane and sober attitude is more than ever needed if we are to live convincingly in a democratic way. Less than ever can Protestants disavow social responsibility and concern. This is no time to support trivial values or to lend our aid to goals that easily become idolatrous. We cannot hope to attain the perfect society simply through eloquent and persuasive preaching of the love commandment of Christ. But we can ally ourselves with modest efforts on this and that front to remove barriers to fellowship and to secure a more tolerable justice for all groups. It will be better to counter communism both at home and abroad through the greatest possible realization of justice than to attempt to beat communism to the ground with threats and fanatical flourishes that imperil the peace we do enjoy.

A smugness that rests secure in its sense of American virtue is hardly distinguishable in kind from communist convictions of self-righteousness. American Protestantism must resist communism with the assurance that the latter is ultimately doomed to defeat under the sovereignty of God. At the same time, let it proclaim the Gospel of love with the awareness that our national life must come under God's judgment before receiving his cleansing grace.

¹"Christian Action on McCarthyism," in *Information Service* for Saturday, June 19, 1954.

²"The Responsible Society in a World Perspective," in *The Christian Century*, September 22, 1954, p. 1145.

³"Let's Join The Human Race, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1950. Pp. 30.

⁴"The Fifth Amendment," in *The Christian Science Monitor*, Monday, February 15, 1954.

⁵The preposterous charge by J. B. Matthews that thousands of Protestant clergymen are communists has been adequately answered by the House Committee on Un-American Activities. The Committee found the Matthews' charge to be lacking in substance and registered its own conviction that Protestant clergymen as a whole are loyal and patriotic citizens.

New College, Edinburgh

WILLIAM W. JELLEMA

On the mound that overlooks the famous street of Princes, the former site of the castle of Mary de Guise, stands New College. Located in a city steeped in Scottish history, New College itself has a history that belies its name. Founded by the Free Church (dissenters from a state-church system) as their counterpart to the faculty of theology in the University of Edinburgh, the New College retained its name when the major section of this body rejoined the Church of Scotland, giving the evidence that the spiritual temperature at least is warm enough to melt and fuse stout hearts. (There is universal lament among the students that this warmth fails to find manifestation in the physical properties of the school. If debating after the nature of the Scholastics ever becomes popular again the affirmative side of the subject: "Resolved, that it is possible for an educational institution to sin" will find excellent examples in the frigid classrooms and library.)

It is in this interesting course of the disunion and reunion in Scottish ecclesiology that the historical background and significance of New College lies. The difficulties were those of a state church and can be summarized under the single word *patronage*. Although very early in the eighteenth century the presbyterian form of church government was secured, in 1712 a statute restoring patronage was imposed upon the conscience of the Scots and disruptions resulted soon after for the odious word smelled of episcopacy and the struggle between Scotland and England.

The first group to leave the established church were the Seceders under Ebenezer Erskine in 1733. In 1761 the next secession, again over the issue of patronage, brought into creation a body known as the Presbytery of Relief. These two bodies subsequently became the United Presbyterian Church in 1847.

But within the Church of Scotland meanwhile, the same problems seethed. Although some of the more vigorous dissenters had left the church in these secessions, the established church still contained two parties. In 1834 the General Assembly of the church, led by the dauntless Thomas Chalmers, passed the Veto Act which declared it to be a fundamental law of the church that no pastor should be intruded upon any congregation contrary to the will of the people.

It was not long before the ability of the church to so prescribe was tested. The parish of Auchterarder rejected the man presented to them and in this they were sustained by the church courts. The state, however, objected that the church could not so legislate for itself and this was sustained by the House of Lords.

Chalmers, who had been Moderator of the General Assembly and who was the professor of divinity in Edinburgh University, led a third of the ministers and members in founding the Free Church of Scotland. Chalmers resigned his professorship and became the first principal and divinity professor in the New College of the Free Church.

Overtures made between the United Presbyterian and the Free Church were finally consummated by union in 1900 under the name of the United Free Church of Scotland. However, a small but significant group from the Free Church declined the union and claimed the whole funds and property of the Free Church. This matter was pursued through the lower courts until at length the House of Lords decided in favor of the small group (soon to become known as the "Wee Free's") and the United Free Church professors were evicted from the New College. But a special royal commission investigated and reported that the Free Church was unable to execute the trust of all it had claimed so by a special act of parliament a commission was established to allocate the property in question between these two bodies. New College became the property of the United Free Church and the Free Church obtained a rather less significant building a few doors away.

Meanwhile, patronage had been modified soon after the 1843 disruption and was finally abolished by Parliament in 1874. With the cause of the divorce thereby eliminated, the Church of Scotland began making proposals to unite on the basis of establishment. This effort was finally rewarded in 1929 when the United Free Church (with a small group abstaining) reunited with the Church of Scotland. The new College became the property of the Establishment.

The city in which New College is located is well appointed as a university city with both beauty and the suburban air that comes with a more sedentary pursuit of life. Located, like Rome, on seven hills, Edinburgh, with its many handsome buildings of classical form, has

a resemblance to another city of antiquity, for architecture conjoined with literary fame has won for it the name Modern Athens. Edinburgh developed as a literary center during the eighteenth century and evidenced such native intellectual talent as David Hume, Adam Smith, Sir William Hamilton, Allan Ramsey, Sir Walter Scott, and Robert Louis Stevenson. Her continuing defense of this position of cultural leadership in Scotland is attested to in some measure perhaps by the Glasgow derision that Edinburgh is "all pride, poverty, and pianos."

But Edinburgh has its less cultural and more dismal moments. The grimy haze of soft coal smoke arising from the chimney pot outlets of the principally defective open fireplaces has crowned the center of Old Edinburgh with a sooty coronet and the appellation "Auld Reekie." That its climate is not always captivating is averred by Robert Louis Stevenson in his book on *Edinburgh* (pp. 9-10). ". . . Edinburgh pays cruelly for her high seat in one of the vilest climates under heaven. She is liable to be beaten upon by all the winds that blow, to be drenched with rain, to be buried in cold sea fogs out of the east, and powdered with the snow as it comes flying southward from the Highland Hills. The weather is raw and boisterous in winter, shifty and ungenial in summer, and a downright meteorological purgatory in the spring. The delicate die early, and I, as a survivor, among bleak winds and plumping rain, have been sometimes tempted to envy them their fate. For all who love shelter and the blessings of the sun, who hate dark weather and perpetual tilting against squalls, there could scarcely be found a more unhomely and harassing place of residence."

The University of Edinburgh has rebuffed these winds since the reign of James VI when, through the public spirit of the town council, it became the realized dream of John Knox. Scotland's fourth university, succeeding St. Andrews, Glasgow, and Aberdeen, all of which were established in the fifteenth century, world famous for the distinction which its medical school acquired under Monros, Cullen, and Gregory, the university has also acquired reputation for its representatives in philosophy and literature, as well as a decisive voice in the world of Reformed theology.

It is not uncommon for a university to attract students beyond its limited geographical domain. Basel's *theologische Fakultät* attracts enough German students alone to put the Swiss in a minority. But there are special reasons for the attraction Edinburgh holds for Americans. The basic recipe for its allurement is probably three parts European-type education, two parts special opportunity, three parts faculty, one part language . . . and a dash of adventure.

To enlarge on these ingredients, take first the European-type education. Class attendance is not rigorously monitored even on an undergraduate level. Professors are every bit as convinced that attendance at their lectures will further a student's education, but the faculty would rather develop responsible students capable of working by themselves than be flattered by full classrooms. Besides, this method implicitly exhorts a professor to present a good lecture while giving him an effective indication of the popularity of his teaching. Doubtless this is not something which could be given to American college students overnight. Such emanci-

pation would probably be freedom from the rigors of compulsion only to become the libertine bondage of wasted time.

Moreover, there is a longer view of examinations. The sentiment here is that American education nurses its students along from one weekly quiz to the nearest mid-term examination and then to the final examination which is often just another mid-term examination. Ask an American college student if he knows French and he will reply that he has "had" it. This view of education as a past tense acquisition of knowledge implies a belief that education can be neatly wrapped like a diploma and then rest forever after: a loving cup of A's and B's. The European system is harsher but apt to produce a more permanent impression of subjects studied. Examinations sometimes occur at the end of a course; more frequently only at the end of the year; and the examinations that are really significant are the final examinations when the course of study has been completed and the student presents himself for the degree.

There is greater stress on languages on the undergraduate level—and throughout the school years—that that to which we are accustomed in America. The pursuit of a classical education at all levels has virtue but it must, in consequence, leave out much that is to be desired. Although proficiency in languages is obviously a useful tool in the ministry, it is not enough to insure the practical usefulness of the minister. New College protests that it exists to turn out ministers rather than scholars, yet its department of practical theology is hardly more than a decorative embellishment. The department Dr. Blocker once described as a davenport is here something a little smaller than a footstool and the practical instruction is left largely to a very useful apprenticeship which the student serves during and/or after his seminary training.

In the postgraduate school, a rigorous effort is maintained to elevate the significance of the degree as high as possible. For instance, the requirements of a degree depend, among other things, on the submission and acceptance of a thesis embodying the result of the student's work. That thesis is submitted to a minimum of three examiners, all of whom must pass favorably on the completed project. Two of the examiners are internal and will usually be the advisors appointed by the *Senatus Academicus* to superintend the study of the student. However, the acceptance of the thesis by the *Senatus* is contingent not only on the approval of these two men but also on the approval of a third, external, examiner. As this external examiner, whether from Cambridge, Oxford, or the Continent will be the expert in the field, the excellence of the thesis is seemingly guaranteed. But postgraduate students are apt to think this is an unbalanced stress on impartiality for point of view and bias, special problems, and frame of reference are often important factors. The annual evidence is that approval or disapproval may rest on the gastronomical state of some Dickens-like character.

However, study at the University of Edinburgh offers certain opportunities which are quite unique in the field of education. Edinburgh concedes that it is possible for a student to study a term or two at another school without detriment to his education. Indeed, they see where it will very probably be helpful and often encourage

such a procedure. Very few schools are less jealous. This attitude makes it possible for a student to become familiar with other faculties and other principal thinkers whose personal acquaintance might be otherwise unavailable to him. By presenting this opportunity, the two years residence has the embryonic blessings of a sabbatical leave.

Perhaps the most famous lectures given at New College are the series of ten each year under the Gifford Lectureship in Natural Theology. Somewhere on the shelf of every minister will be found one or more books containing these lectures. Last year the gifted historian Arnold J. Toynbee, director of studies in the Royal Institute of International Affairs, and research professor of international history in the University of London returned for a second series under the title "Religio Historici. Religion in a Westernising World." Professor Toynbee urged that the essence be disengaged from the accident in mankind's religious heritage. His own attempt, alluded to by these words: "The heart of so great a mystery (i.e. the mystery of the universe) can never be reached by following one road only" peeled the onion of Christianity so far as to leave only enough vapor to bring a tear to the eyes of those who had hoped there was more than a scent to the Gospel. (Rudolf Bultmann, who was to have been this year's Gifford lecturer, has been constrained by illness to forego the honor for this term.)

Then too, the proximity of the Continent lures most of the New College students during vacation time to investigate its culture, its languages, its historical sites, and its places of beauty. Travel offers an educational enrichment all its own, but travel on the Continent of Europe is of particular advantage to the student of theology, the pursuer of church history, the seeker after contemporary modes and drifts of theological and philosophical thought, or the ecumenical enthusiast. For good or ill, a large portion of the Christian world has for centuries taken its cue from European prompters.

That "theology is created in Germany, corrupted in America, and corrected in Scotland," is a Continental proverb. While this unfortunate and rather sinister proverb commends the propriety of Scottish theology, overtones of the statement are that Scottish theology finds its way to the track after the race is over and the winners proclaimed. But if Scottish theology has seemed lugubrious to its critics, it is not the lethargic word of redactors. Instead, New College represents what might be called a temperate European theology. This is to say that although it is probably not to be found in the vanguard of the starkly different and radical, yet it is informed on the latest and best in current thought. Within the faculty is found a reassuring temperateness that allows for difference of opinion without rabid personal touches. The school does not represent one unified viewpoint but rather prides itself on the fact that it is neither liberal nor conservative nor neo-orthodox. Far from having no view, however, the faculty eclectically contains men who are conservative and men who are liberal and men who are neo-orthodox.

This year Matthew Black leaves to become Principal of St. Andrews and William Manson has been recalled from retirement to serve in his old chair in New Testament in the place of Black. This vacancy, combined with the death last year of O. S. Rankin, and the

eventual retirement of Baillie, leaves an impressive opening in the ranks of the faculty. The filling of these positions in the very near future may well determine a new theological tone for the school.

New College has always been more a faculty than a location or a history. Men of unquestioned ability and scholarship have continually brought praise and honor to the twin towers of New College. Although many of these men failed to reflect their greatness in their writings, (e.g. Thomas Chalmers), others have acquired fame as authors. Such a man as A. B. Davidson still holds an impressive following with his *Old Testament Prophecy* and *The Theology of the Old Testament*. Adam Welch, another man in the Old Testament Department (in whose critical-theological line Porteous stands today), wrote *The Religion of Israel Under the Kingdom*. H.A.A. Kennedy wrote *The Theology of the Epistles*, and H. R. Mackintosh is famous for many works including *The Divine Initiative*, *The Person of Jesus Christ*, and *Immortality and the Future*. William Manson's *Jesus the Messiah* should be mentioned as well as his *The Epistle to the Hebrews*.

William Manson's return to New College raises to a more eminent degree a faculty now headed by Principal John Baillie whose many books have been the occasion for his wide renown. His interest and effort in the realm of ecumenicity, moreover, have been recently highlighted by his selection as one of the Presidents of the World Council of Churches.

As a theologian, Baillie has for years been reckoned a liberal. He probably still is. But it is a liberalism that has taken more than half a step in a conservative direction. His liberalism has been built on the foundation of an extremely conservative Highland background. For this reason his theology does not always plunge to quite the depth that reason digs for it, but remains honest and frankly puzzled at those points where background and reason most sharply collide.

The theology of Professor T. F. Torrance is, by his own confession, principally Barthian. Indeed, he speaks of his former instructor in such glowing terms that it is sometimes difficult to catch a differentiation between Barth and St. Paul. There is, however, one distinction of meaning between them. Whereas Barth says "all of Europe is baptized . . . so what?", Torrance insists on the validity and significance of infant baptism and the right and responsibility of the church to baptize those born within her covenantal realm. Although Barth says he holds his view only tentatively, this difference may signify a larger and more basic difference in their views of the sacraments, the covenant, and the church. It does indicate that fundamentally both men speak out of the age and area in which they live. In addition it exhibits Torrance (who will also be responsible for translating Barth's *Dogmatics* into English very soon) attempting to remodel Barth to the Anglo-Saxon die.

Charles S. Duthie, Principal in his own Congregational College, serves also on the faculty of New College bringing with him a vast knowledge of the seventeenth century, the Puritans, and a particular awareness of the distinctive contributions of many of the important figures of that era. His teaching and administrative duties at his own school do not permit him an excessive program at New College but he takes an interest in the

students there far and beyond the few hours of his academic schedule.

Although there are other men on the faculty deserving mention, such as N. W. Porteous, who last year delivered the Stone Lectures, so familiar to all in the household of the Reformed faith, and J. H. S. Burleigh, one of the world's foremost authorities on Augustine, there is no theologian like James S. Stewart. He is not a great theologian as the originator of some new, revolutionary, or devastating system of thought, but because his theology has gripped his life. Many another theologian has placed his theology on printed page or in the minds of his students but few have succeeded in evidencing it before the hardest critics of all: the world of individuals with whom one daily comes in contact. To read his books on the background of this thought is to read the living theology of a great Christian.

This then is New College: located in a capital city

of beauty, serving a church notable for Reformed endeavor, maintaining a succession of distinguished teachers, presenting educational opportunities in the combined areas of ministry and scholarship.

WRITERS IN THIS ISSUE

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Book Reviews

The Book of Isaiah, by George L. Robinson, Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1954. Pp. 170. \$2.50.

This treatment of the "Prince of the Prophets" by a well known and highly esteemed Bible student, author and lecturer first appeared in 1910. It was revised in 1938, and now revised and newly published in 1954.

Doctor George L. Robinson hardly needs an introduction to most Bible students. From 1912 until his emeritatem and retirement he taught at McCormick Theological Seminary in Chicago.

The book is planned as a guide for a systematic study of the entire book of Isaiah. The general plan is similar to the author's *Leaders of Israel* and *The Twelve Minor Prophets*. The study of Isaiah is made in fifteen studies or units, beginning with the Prophet's Life and Writings, followed by an analysis of the canonical book. This is followed by the historical pattern of the eighth century B.C. This chapter is a most valuable treatment inasmuch as Doctor Robinson presents a significant chart (p. 37) in which is clearly portrayed, at a glance, the interrelation of secular history with the record of biblical history. This pattern indicates the several crises in the life and times of Isaiah out of which, in large measure, his messages emerged and to which he addressed himself. In this discussion the author points out the religious, social and ethical forces at work as well as the political and international movements of that period. In this connection, the writer presents a chronological table (p. 74) for easy reference which follows the traditional dating of key events of Isaiah's period.

Study Four deals with the inner structure of the book. "In the main they [Isaiah's prophecies] stand in chronological order. All dates mentioned are in strict historical sequence." The author points out that in several instances there are notable departures from a rigid chronological order. There is also a grouping of related oracles, for instance, against foreign nations (Chaps. 13-23) that obviously belong to various dates. For these variations and departures from the rigid historical sequence Doctor Robinson has his answers. At times Isaiah groups the chapters according to subject matter.

From Study Six on the author treats such subjects as Judah's Social Sins (Chapters 1-6), Judah's Political Entanglements (7-12), Burdens Concerning Foreign Nations (13-23; 34, 35), Spiritual Messages of Salvation (24-27), Series of Six Woes

(28-33), History, Prophecy and Song (36-39), Deliverance From Captivity Through Cyrus (40-48), The Servant of Jehovah (49-57), The Future Glory of the People of God (58-66).

In each of these units the author presents brief expositions of the chapters, breaking them down into a series of interpretative statements, in many instances suggesting pertinent themes and paramount lessons of permanent value. Here is a wealth of suggestive sermonic materials for the preacher, serving to stimulate his thinking and further study.

In Study Five this veteran scholar takes up the critical problem in the book and discusses it most thoroughly. Were all sixty-six chapters in the book written by Isaiah, the son of Amoz, of the eighth century B.C.? Or were chapters forty to sixty-six written during the time of the Babylonian exile? What about other passages in chapters one to thirty-nine that speak of the Messianic age, universal peace, conversion of the heathen, etc.?

A concise history of the critical problem is presented listing exponents of both primary positions taken. Those scholars holding to the Deutero and Trito Isaiah positions the author speaks of as students who "disintegrate" the book. He classifies these critics into two groups — the radicals represented by Drs. Cheyne, Duhm, Gray, Marti who reject approximately 1030 verses out of the total 1292 in the book; the moderates, represented by Drs. G. A. Smith, Kirkpatrick, A. B. Davidson, who claim that forty-four chapters out of the sixty-six are non-Isaianic.

Robinson points out that there have not been wanting in all the years of the controversy able defenders of the unity of Isaiah's writings. He points to exponents such as: Strachey, Nagelsbach, Bredenkamp, Barnes, Green, Vos, Allis — and others. Dr. Robinson himself holds tenaciously to the unity position. In the preface to the 1938 edition when asked, "Do you still believe in the unity of Isaiah?" He answers: "Am more convinced than ever." In the 1954 edition the author has a brief preface in which he deals with *The Dead Sea Scroll*. He says: "Nor has the Scroll any colophons, or marks to separate one section from another. For example, chap. 40:1, 'Comfort ye, comfort ye' is written close to the last verse of chap. 39, the scribe actually writing it on the last line of space left on

the page. The scribe thus brings the "comforts" of the incomparable God in Chap. 40 into closest possible connection with the threats of Chap. 39: apparently quite unconscious of the critical idea that they were written centuries apart! The scribe may be teaching us! The unity of the book is not a modern opinion." Again he says: "The very *Title* of the Book tells us that Isaiah had "visions"; i.e., revelations of God, which he was commissioned, as the human amanuensis, to record." One wonders how strong an argument for unity the Dead Sea Scrolls present.

Having given a good history of the critical problem, and, having identified exponents of the several theories, the author points out the arguments of the negative higher critics and meets them as he goes along in his study. He agrees that a prophet in general spoke out of a definite historical situation and to the needs of his own generation; however, he asserts this principle must be "accompanied with certain cautions equally essential." Among these cautions is listed the argument that not every prophecy can be traced, independently of its context, to a definite historical situation (cf. Joel 3; Zech. 9-14).

Doctor Robinson takes real issue with those critics who would limit the horizon of the divinely inspired prophet who portrays the "conversion of the heathen" as in 2:24; who pictures "universal peace" as in 11:1-9, or "universal judgment" as in 14:26, or the apocalyptic in 24-27. So also would he take issue with those who would deny Isaiah of the eighth century the horizon in 40-66 which pictures the Babylonian Exile and the restoration of the Jews under Cyrus.

To this author "Isaiah 2:2-4 is a key to the prophets' horizon; and, chapters 40-66 are in general wrapped up in the vision and commission of the prophet's inaugural call (chap. 6)" (p. 63).

All students will not agree with the author's position on the critical problem. Nevertheless, this is a good book which will open a fresh and stimulating study of the "king of the prophets."

— G. H. MENNENGA

A History of Preaching, by Edwin C. Dargan, Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1954. Pp. 578. \$7.95.

Dr. Dargan was the successor to famous John Broadus of the Southern Baptist Seminary at Louisville, Kentucky. He stood within the shadow of a mighty spirit who did much to formulate what may be called the "principles of sermon construction." Broadus used to take his classes on excursions into areas of the life of the Christian Church to help them to discover the cross currents of life out of which came the preachers who have dotted the pages of history, and have created for themselves places of influence and significance. That heritage worked upon Dargan, so that when he came to follow Broadus in the work of training young men of his generation to become "preachers of the Word," he felt it necessary to carry forward the type of procedure Broadus had initiated. Consequently, Dargan gave this book to the world in its original form in 1904. This is a reprint done by the Baker Book House. By reprinting Baker has done all who are interested in reading of this type a wonderful service, because copies of the original work were becoming very scarce. Difficulty in getting hold of the material dissuaded many from pursuing the study; the re-publication of the work will undoubtedly stimulate many students of preaching to acquaint themselves with the larger historical background upon which their present interest moves. This book is the encyclopedia on the History of Preaching.

When he discusses the origination of Christian preaching the author suggests three factors which seem to me to be eminently

correct, and suggestive thoughts. He argues that Christian preaching is the product of the convergence of the Greek oratory, of Hebrew prophecy, and of the Christian Gospel. "From this last, as directly resting upon the second, and after a time considerably influenced by the first, came preaching as history knows it." That is the kind of statement that needs only to be uttered to commend itself as true. Maybe it is possible for anyone to think this out for himself, if he has some adequate familiarity with history; it is a good thought to have, in any case, and truer than true. The old Greeks delighted in communication; they loved to discuss. In Athens they even came together to spend "their time in nothing else but either to tell or to hear some new thing." Demosthenes with pebbles in his mouth in order to overcome a speech impediment, and then later his Philippians in the cause of freedom — of course, Greek oratory was a large stream flowing toward the convergence with other streams to produce Christian preaching. Then, from the hills of rugged Palestine came that series of men who march through the Old Testament pages speaking, never in behalf of themselves, but always in behalf of Another who breathed into their minds a message that caused them to say "Thou saith the Lord." The last of that noble line stood beside the tortuous Jordan River and announced to the astonished ears of listening Israelites, "I am the Voice of one crying, 'Prepare ye the way of the Lord.'" And then, some decades later, came the apostles, the New Testament prophets, and the evangelists with the announcement that God had intervened in human affairs through the ministry and death of his Son. The Good News was a historical fact! "Jesus came preaching," and his followers went forth "teaching and preaching." It is a glamorous idea to pursue, but the pursuit does not always yield such shining experiences. Dargan brings that out quite clearly in the material he presents, and in the manner in which he lets the history of preaching unfold. Preaching influenced its time, but was also influenced by the times to which it spoke; preachers rose like mountains out of their day, but they were also colored by the day in which they spoke. There was only one preacher in all history who was not also a creature of his day; he was the creator of all the days! For the rest, the story of preaching is a great story, but it is the story of men with all the frailties to which men are heir.

The book now appears in one volume, though it came out originally in two volumes. Dargan allowed the Reformation time to be the natural watershed. In Volume I he discussed the history of preaching through the Reformation; in Volume II he treated the significant preachers from post-Reformation days down through the 19th century. He meant to produce a third volume in which he expected to write about preaching in America, but that volume was never written. It is regrettable that this purpose was never consummated, because one of the very patent omissions of the work is that only passing references are made, toward the end of the work itself, to some of the great pulpit lights of the American scene. Most students of preaching in this country would undoubtedly have been greatly inspired and benefited by opportunity to study America's pulpit-masters upon the background which Dargan was so eminently successful in re-creating for all the preachers whose work he studied. Granting the omission of these significant chapters it is definitely advantageous to have all the material in one volume.

One of the startling discoveries that comes to a reader of this book is that preaching does not sparkle through every age of church history. There are times when the lights seem almost ready to go out. Men were victimized both by apathy and by the spirit of the day in which they lived. God's preachers do

not always present themselves as towers of strength that rise out of the swirling waters of secularism; God's men actually allowed themselves to succumb to the prevalent moods of their day! It is amazing to how many and how various conditions preachers of various generations capitulated. The old adage rises at this point also, "The best of men are men at best." But, it is equally remarkable that, though human weaknesses do appear all along the line, God moves forward, and brings human life to its present level of understanding, development, and achievement. Man may fail God, but man cannot thwart God. This *History of Preaching* shows that truth as really as do the pages of any other kind of history. It is pathetic that men so easily yield to life's downward pull, and surrender their vision, but — the Master is not foiled.

"Though the cause of evil prosper, yet 'tis truth alone
is strong;
Truth forever on the scaffold, wrong forever on the
throne,
Yet that scaffold sways the future, and, behind the dim
unknown,
Standeth God within the shadow keeping watch above
His own."

It is remarkable how Dargan succeeds in setting that truth of Divine Providence before his readers. The chapters of homiletical achievement are grand chapters — it is too bad there are not more of them — but those noble chapters are so noble that one is bound to feel that they will increase in number and in strength as coming years unfold, and that, ultimately, this best to which the best of men give themselves will triumph even before enemies.

One fact becomes quite plain from the reading of this book, and that is that simple Biblical preaching brings the most permanent and the most transforming results. The author shows quite clearly that philosophy, as such, was not a good handmaiden to preaching, and that philosophical molds did not provide the most effective form for the message of Christianity. Even such an effort as that put forth by Origen of Alexandria, which has caused his name to be identified with what is known as "the allegorical method," showed itself to be beyond, and sometimes contrary to, the purposes of the Scriptures themselves. Undoubtedly Origen gave himself to this "extra" method because he was such a firm believer in expository work. That steady exposition led him to think that by spiritualizing a text — really allegorizing on the plain statements of Scripture — he would be bringing out deeper and more significant truth. But, the school at Antioch soon came to oppose this type of teaching and procedure, and emphasized an approach that put emphasis upon the historical-grammatical meaning of the verses of Scripture. Imagination is a strong tool for allegorizing; imagination is human, and to err is human, therefore, don't allegorize. From almost the beginning of the record of preaching there has been a high regard for the integrity and efficacy of the Scripture, and men have been inclined to let it speak for itself through them. Strong preaching has been Biblical preaching.

That contention is more than confirmed by the experiences of the Reformation, and the post-Reformation periods. Theologians — yes, all the leaders of the Reformation had good title to that classification. In addition, however, they were also first class preachers and their passion was to declare the truths that they had found in Scripture. Without really knowing the reason Martin Luther had been saturated with the teachings of the Word before he publicized the affirmations that became the foundation of the Reformation. And John Calvin spent his whole life discovering the truths of the Scripture, and enunciating them as clearly as possible so that Prot-

estants should be able to set forth a reason for the hope that was in them. In the post-Reformation era Richard Baxter stands like a great light, not always equally clear, but always earnest and purposeful. A great company of men who gave themselves to preach the Word of God as "dying men to dying men." I have read somewhere that it was legislated in certain portions of the Protestant Church of that day that no man could be ordained to the Christian ministry unless he had first proved himself a successful teacher. And who is a good teacher? One who loves people, and who has ability to state profound truth so simply that the simplest can understand.

Fact is, even the Romans paid respect to this teaching-preaching ministry of the Protestants when they organized the Counter Reformation. By their statement of the positions accepted in Roman theology through the theological formulations of the Council of Trent, and by their permission given to Ignatius Loyola to establish the Jesuit Order, the Roman Church acknowledged the potency of the procedures which had caused Protestantism to move like a prairie fire over countries of Europe. History teaches that the Counter Reformation stopped the progress of the Reformation, and that countries which had not yet embraced Protestantism in 1563 never became Protestant. That speaks volumes for the strength of the emphases of original Protestants and of Protestantism itself. Preaching the Word of God — that is the recipe.

Dargan's method — perhaps he could not help himself; perforce he had to go at matters rather analytically, and not too pictorially and graphically — sometimes leaves rather much to be desired. However, once a reader begins to appreciate the fact that the pages of the book deal with living personalities so that he lets the personalities come to speak to him through what Dargan has written, one cannot but have his imagination kindled because of the numerous great spirits who were willing to make themselves "Candles of the Lord" in the place and in the age that were theirs.

Every seminary student should be made to read this book of Dargan, and to read it so slowly that he can absorb what he reads; the experience will have a lasting influence upon his life. Ministers should have this book in their libraries so that they can refer to it frequently lest they lose their passion in the multiplicity of duties that become theirs. There is much food for thought in this large book; there are countless kindly, thoughtful souls whose story is told on the pages of the book; occasional reference to the book, and perusal of its pages will doubtless increase one's own sense of unworthiness for such a task as that of preaching, but will also cause one to lift up his eyes to wider horizons of possibility and of realization.

— JOHN R. MULDER.

Revelation and Religion, by H. H. Farmer, New York: Harper & Brothers, 1954. Pp. 239. \$3.50.

This is the first volume of Farmer's Gifford Lectures of 1950, given under the title "The Theological Interpretation of Religion." It is a worthy addition to the notable series.

Farmer has set for himself the formidable task of analyzing and classifying from a "specifically Christian theological interpretation of religion" the complex data which encumber the field of the comparative study of religions. This, then, is a pioneering attempt to present an intellectually respectable study of the phenomena of religious consciousness and its physical manifestations from an admittedly evangelical Christian theological motivation.

The central affirmation of the Christian faith, as Farmer sees it, is the fact of the Incarnation, — the fact "that God has made

unique and final revelation of Himself as personal in history through Jesus Christ and through the personal relationship to Himself which that revelation makes possible and calls into being" (p. 23). Those who are acquainted with Farmer's thought will at once recognize the "I-Thou relationship" theme which he has presented so persuasively in many of his previous works. The present volume is an extension of that theme into the problem of the relationship of Christianity to the non-Christian religions.

In developing his analysis, Farmer rejects the so-called objective or neutral study methods, and utilizes the method known as "productive empathy," the method which penetrates "to the living essence of religion, as it lies behind and within its manifestations, by feeling our way into it on the basis of our own inner religious faith and experience" (p. 45). This necessitates an analysis of the religious response to the central affirmation, and in the light of that analysis to enter empathetically into the religious experiences of the devotees of the other religions.

The Christian response to the fact of the Incarnation Farmer finds in the Christian act of worship, which he calls the "normative concept of religion." The analysis proceeds under the rubric of the Trinitarian formula, God—the Father,—the Son,—the Holy Spirit. When a Christian worships God he experiences the very "God-ness" of God, God as the ontologically other, the source of all being. He likewise knows God in his axiological otherness; that is, he experiences his own unworthiness, and realizes that his own personal well-being is tied up with God. But this God also comes to him as Father, hence as Person to person. This unique personal relationship is acutely experienced in God the Son, and particularly in Holy Communion, "the Christian Church's central act of worship," where God meets us savingly in the Person of his Son. Christian worship at this point makes the worshipper conscious of God's giving all to him, and claiming all from him. When he is conscious of the Holy Spirit's activity, he becomes aware that this personal God, who stands in the "I-Thou" relationship to him, is also at once intimately and powerfully present within his own being. The entire encounter with God through the act of worship is pervaded with a feeling tone which is *sui generis*. It is the "Peace of God" as distinguished from "Peace of Mind." What Farmer analytically isolates in experience is actually inseparable. However, the isolation is both valid and necessary, and forms a fruitful yardstick by which to measure the varying proportions and distortions of the religious experience. With these criteria (derived from the analytics of the Christian act of worship), the author attempts to distinguish the truly religious from the non-religious, and to classify religious types according to the "normative concept of religion."

Animism, animatism, demonology, survival of soul concepts, ancestor cults, and (with some qualifications) totemism, mana, and tabu are ruled out as religions *per se*. Where then, can one find living religion among the so-called primitive religions? Farmer finds it in the "total state of mind" of the primitive worshipper or worshipping group, rather than in conceptual "ideas." The God of the "I-Thou" relationship is pressing in upon men even through polytheism. Of course, through these primitive manifestations, the apprehension of God as personal is marginal and grossly distorted, but Farmer insists that it is real nevertheless. "What we have to realize is that though notionally or theologically polytheism and monotheism are exclusive of one another, they are by no means wholly so when seen from within the religious experience itself" (p. 100).

In the classification of religions according to religious types, Farmer resorts to the above-mentioned categories. Non-Christian

forms of living religion differ from "normative" Christianity in the disproportion or "obsessive dominance" (p. 114) of one of the categories at the expense of the others. The dominant element itself, when it breaks loose from the others, tends more and more to perversion and error. Christianity, too, though "normative" has at various times in its history and experience been guilty of distortion when one or more of the integral elements broke out of the harmonious tension of the fullness of the worship-experience and claimed for itself absolute validity and authority at the expense of the others.

On the basis of dominant tendencies, the author classifies the non-Christian living religions in the broad types of the religions of Absolute Dependence, Ideal Values, Introversion, Obligation and Eudaemonism. A glance at the analysis of the Absolute Dependence type will suffice to illustrate the method of development Farmer uses. Out of the hopper of universal religious experience Farmer sifts those whose *grund-motif* focuses "on the thought of divine reality as the ultimate power from which everything derives its being" (p. 116). These are the religions which make the category of God-as-ontologically-other the essence of their experience. The analysis then proceeds to reveal the distortions and perversions which develop when this particular type breaks away from the full revelation of God in Christ "which is always (as it were) pulling back the various elements in the full encounter with and apprehension of God as Personal to their controlling centre, Christ, and unifying them there" (p. 125). Farmer finds the distortion mainly in the fact that these religions tend to negate the Person-to-person element. At times God is thought to be the "all pervading cosmic principle or power" upon which everything depends (Schleiermacher, Spinoza, Tao, etc.). At other times when God is thought of as more personal than power-principle, he is conceived as sovereign will, all-determining and arbitrary (Islam, extreme orthodox Calvinism of the double predestinarian type, etc.). While God as the source of all being is an essential ingredient in any living religion, when this element leaps out of the full-orbed tension and becomes the controlling core of the religious experience (be it Christian or non-Christian) the result is perversion more-or-less gross depending on how meaningfully the other elements are allowed to enter the experience, albeit in a subsidiary way.

The volume concludes with a discussion of the subjective or adjectival factors of religious experience. These factors are concerned with some of man's basic needs and with the satisfying of those needs. Man's societal impulses, his craving for life and power, his desires for withdrawal, fulfillment, and integration are considered. These fundamental necessities of human nature can be met in ways which exclude the peculiarly religious elements. Farmer attempts in his analysis to dissociate the religious from the pseudo-religious, always keeping in focus God's self-revelation in Jesus Christ and the Christian apprehension of this revelation in the act of Christian worship. He endeavors to show how the Christian revelation and experience *in principle* meet those needs and keep in check ersatz or incomplete satisfactions of them.

In his preface, Farmer admits that his excursion into the field under consideration can be considered little more than a "blazing of a trail." As far as this reviewer can ascertain, he has more than fulfilled this purpose. In fact, the trail which he has blazed calls emphatic attention to the necessity for continually wrestling with the problems and intricacies involved in the relationship of Christianity with the non-Christian religions. Not only has he called attention to this necessity, but in his use of the "I-Thou relationship" theme he has gone beyond

the "Rethinking Missions" controversy of the recent past, and also beyond the "Natural Law" discussion of the present day, and has pointed the way to much further creative discussion on the problem. The use of this theme and the method of classification utilized (which appears to me to be, without the time to document this conclusion, an adaptation of the method used by Troeltsch in his monumental *Social Teaching of the Christian Churches*, and to be employed so effectively by some of the Scandinavian theologians in our day), seem to be the two outstanding contributions of the book.

This is not to say that either the theme or the method of classification is foolproof. One suspects, for instance, that Farmer will be challenged by those who cannot accept the uniqueness of the Christian revelation and experience. The inherent subjectivism of his approach will be criticized, this in spite of his intellectual integrity in trying to forestall this criticism. Not only will he be criticized by those without the pale of Christendom, but also by those who stand within the Christian tradition. The "I-Thou relationship" as the essence of living religion and the Christian act of worship as "normative" will not be acceptable to all (cf. Wieman, etc.). Here again the accusation of subjectivism can be made. In a sense this criticism is inescapable. Karl Mannheim in his works on the construction of a "sociology of knowledge" has reminded us that all knowledge is conditioned by the social milieu of the knower. On page 140, Farmer reveals the accuracy of Mannheim's contention when he maintains that "of all the types of religion which fall short of the rounded balance and completeness of the Christian experience in its ideal form," the religion of obligation "is the one most worthy of respect." He admits that his own religious temperament and Presbyterian upbringing may predispose him in favor of this type, yet he attempts to bolster his selection with weightier arguments. One feels, however, that the subjective predisposition is really the prime motivation. Others, with differing natures and backgrounds, could make divergent claims.

Farmer's attempt to include Christianity within the fold of other religions and at the same time to insure its uniqueness on the basis of his main theme will continue to be debated. His defense against Brunner's position that Christianity can be classified with the other religions only "at the point where sin corrupts it" (p. 40) is acute, and to this reviewer compelling; but one feels that Brunner has not been completely silenced on this moot relationship.

The use of Christian worship as providing the analytics of normative religion is a brilliant tactical maneuver on Farmer's part. It obviates the necessity to engage in theological precision in certain difficult and perplexing areas. One wonders at times whether the gulf which exists between living religion as experienced and conceptual theological reflection upon such experience is as deep as Farmer sometimes suggests. He is not oblivious to the difficulties involved for he promises in a footnote on page 70 to discuss in a second volume "the way in which the oppositions and contraries, which disclose themselves to conceptual thought, are related to the 'unities' of religious awareness." One must withhold further comment on this vital phase of Farmer's analysis until all the arguments are in.

The value of the book is increased by the inclusion of two indexes, one of "Names" and the other of "Subjects." This is particularly important because of the arrangement of the material in the text.

While the book may be too technical for the average ministerial study program, for those who are willing to do careful and creative reflection on the relationship of Christianity to the

non-Christian religions and the consequent problems involved, and those who are interested in the analysis of the data of universal religious experience from an evangelical position, Farmer's contribution is first-rate. No course in the construction of a philosophy or theology of missions could be considered adequate which neglects this work.

— ARNOLD J. VAN LUMMEL

The History and Character of Calvinism, by John T. McNeill, New York: Oxford University Press, 1954. Pp. 466. \$6.00.

In view of the recent veritable flood of Calvin studies and the startling renascence of Reformed theology in many quarters where for long it was "a pageant faded," it is interesting to note in older volumes the lament or sigh of relief, depending upon the theological predilections of the writer, that the day of Calvin's influence in church and theology is long since past. Thus, in his celebrated lecture on *Calvinism* delivered at St. Andrews in 1871 when he was rector of that University, James Anthony Froude gave his estimate of the reaction of the nineteenth century to his subject: "Every one here present must have become familiar in late years with the change of tone throughout Europe and America on the subject of Calvinism. After being accepted for two centuries in all Protestant countries as the final account of the relations between man and his Maker, it has come to be regarded by liberal thinkers as a system of belief incredible in itself, dishonouring to its object, and as intolerable as it has been itself intolerant" (p. 4). And near the close he lamented that Calvin's "name is now associated only with gloom and austerity" (p. 53). At the end of the "age of liberalism" in which Froude delivered his lecture Georgia Harkness could write that Calvin's "theology is in eclipse," that "opprobrium" has settled on his shoulders through the centuries, and that his "name connotes usually a shadowy figure — often a sinister figure — one who believed in predestination and other strange ideas that nobody now accepts" (*John Calvin: The Man and His Ethics*, pp. vii, 259).

The latter judgment wouldn't be altogether surprising to the Reformer were he to hear it for, from the reception which his doctrine received from his enemies in his own time and from his understanding of human nature, he would not have been so naive as to suppose that all future generations would rise up and call him blessed. Dr. McNeill puts this beautifully as he introduces us to his study of Calvin in the second section of his book. He reminds us of the celebration of Calvin's death in the city of his birth in 1551, thirteen years before his actual demise. An illness of Calvin, unverified rumor, and wishful thinking, says McNeill, had brought it on. The author continues: "A year later, when Noyon suffered a disastrous fire, Calvin expressed his sorrow for the ruined city, but remarked: 'I survive my birthplace that last year gave solemn thanks for my supposed death.' When he died in Geneva in 1564, an eyewitness wrote that his corpse was 'followed by almost the whole city, not without many tears.' In these incidents lies a kind of allegory of Calvin's fate in history. He has been execrated and defamed, admired and extolled. His influence has sometimes been jubilantly reported to have expired; but it has survived the authors of the reports. He remains so famous that, as is wont to happen with the great, persons ignorant of his life and work pronounce judgment upon him with the utmost finality. But he will not be thus easily dismissed. It is remarkable that in this age of stress and perplexity, when most people are absorbed in problems that seem far removed from his interests, Calvin's writings have been

read with renewed attention and have vitally affected trends and movements in every sector of theological and Christian social thought" (p. 93).

It is evident that the volume before us is the fruit of long and careful study which has enabled the author to challenge many popular notions about Calvin and his teaching. Whereas some have charged that the (to them) stern and forbidding side of his thought comes from an unlovely and cold personality, that he rarely laughed and had few friends, McNeill feels the opposite to be true (pp. 99, 116, 159, 231, 406, 436 *et al.*). Whereas some have claimed that Calvin sought personal ambition and mastery over men, that claim is denied here (p. 185). The Reformer's intolerance has been to many an incontrovertible fact, but McNeill dares challenge their judgment (p. 228). Others have opined that Calvin had no appreciation for beauty but here we read, "In nothing, perhaps, has Calvin been more misjudged than in the view that he lacked any aesthetic sense" (p. 231).

Some have seen the Reformer mainly as a resolute systematizer in which his true genius lay, and Calvinists have been called "the logicians *par excellence* amongst theologians." Dr. H. H. Meeter, who uses that expression, then refers to Oliver Wendell Holmes' satirization of this aspect of Calvinism, as he observed it, in *The Deacon's Masterpiece*. "The old one-hoss shay, which was so well constructed that every nut and bolt and bar and spoke was of equal strength and collapsed all at once before the meeting house, was to him the story of Calvinism. As a masterpiece of logic it had continued for ages, but was supposed to have collapsed completely when transcendentalism gained the ascendancy in New England" (*The Fundamental Principle of Calvinism*, pp. 25f). Professor McNeill's judgment is that "it is a superficial judgment that regards him as a resolute systematizer whose ideas are wholly unambiguous and consistent and set in a mold of flawless logic . . . At many points . . . Calvin does not hesitate to leave unresolved paradoxes and logical tensions. Numerous writers of our generation have stressed this dialectical character of his thought. Peter Barth has expressed it by condemning the attempt to make any one doctrine basic to his theology, which is rather to be thought of as an assertion of the Word of God in all its complex variety and hidden unity" (pp. 201f). Since this emphasis, made frequently in recent studies, is an interesting one to many of our readers, I shall quote some words from T. F. Torrance, a competent student of Calvin: "Nothing," says he, "has done more harm to Calvinism than the invention and perpetuation of the myth that Calvin's theology was a severely logical structure. That notion grew up on French soil and was perpetuated by the great succession of Calvinist Schoolmen on the Continent, eminently in Holland. Modern research, however, makes it indubitably clear that Calvin's whole theology was formulated in a very definite reaction against the arid logical schematisms into which the doctrines of the Church had been thrust by 'the frigid doctors of the Sorbonne,' as he called them, and that again and again he was content to leave the ends of his theological thinking loose for the precise reason that theology runs out always to the point of wonder where we can only clap our hands on our mouth and remember that we are humble creatures. The whole inner substance of Calvin's teaching . . . enshrines mystery and resists rationalistic schematization — so that it is a great disservice to interpret him as above all a logician" ("Our Witness Through Doctrine," an address given at the Seventeenth General Council of the Alliance of Reformed Churches, Princeton, 1954).

But McNeill is not done challenging current opinion. Over

against the supposition that Calvin was narrow in his ecclesiastical sympathies we read that "he favored a liberal practice of intercommunion between churches, even where minor divergencies existed in doctrine, discipline and worship" (p. 229; cf. pp. 388f); and that if he were alive today "we can imagine" him "functioning in our day as a learned, energetic, prophetic at times splenetic, yet cautious leader of world Protestantism, with a leading role in the ecumenical revival and in Christian thought and learning" (p. 234; cf. p. 417). Whether the latter supposition is justified or not the reader may judge, but it shows that this able scholar does not see Calvin as a narrow ecclesiastic whose sympathies and love extend no farther than the borders of his land of adoption or immediate church fellowship.

Whereas Miss Harkness wrote, "Nobody but a trained jurist could have carved out so successfully the ecclesiastical system which he there established, and both the theology and the organization of the Calvinistic church bear the stamp of a law-trained mind" (*op. cit.*, p. 5); we read here that "there is extremely little in his work as a theologian that is a product of his legal training" (p. 203). It has been said that "Calvinism and capitalism in history have been closely linked together" (H. H. Meeter, *op. cit.*, p. 95; the classic which develops this thesis is Max Weber's *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*). This author claims that "the whole subject cries out for more adequate and comprehensive study than it has received" and that some works have already pointed to evidence "that confutes the views of Max Weber associating Calvinism with capitalism" (p. 418f). Moreover, he writes, Calvin's conception of stewardship was such that "many of the prosperous nominal members of churches of Calvinist tradition would be offended if they were confronted by Calvin's demands upon men of wealth. Capitalists who are in reality ethically Calvinist are those whose chief concern is not to gain wealth but to apply it to beneficent uses" (p. 438).

One gets the impression in reading this book that the author seeks to be objectively true to the historical data. Where he feels eulogy is due he does not fail to give it; unlike Doumergue, who in his classic work seems to hesitate being adversely critical of the Reformer, Dr. McNeill passes judgment on his temper (p. 155), vindictiveness on occasion (p. 171), and sarcasm (p. 231) as well, of course, as his sharing in the beliefs common to the age such as witchcraft and harsh treatment of heretics. The volume exhibits a profound appreciation for the almost unbelievable accomplishments of the Reformer (p. 204 *et al.*) and its last chapter says well that the spirit of Calvinism is not restricted to Reformed churches but has permeated a vastly wider area of the whole body of Christ.

In view of the excellent volume which the author has given us it almost seems unappreciative to review the whole to probe for possible weaknesses in his treatment. Insufficient is said, however, about the theology of Calvin, and there is not, it seems to us, material here on the character of Calvinism that there might well be. There is any amount of material on the former, of course, and the volume increases; and the studies of Doumergue and Froude cited above, of Dakin (*Calvinism*), Warfield (*Calvin and Calvinism*) and others, treat in greater detail the latter consideration. One cannot do everything in one volume and Dr. McNeill, an appreciative heir of the tradition on which he writes, gives the master's touch to what he does cover. One amazing error is the statement in the section on Zwingli that the Second Helvetic Confession "accepts (Chapter XI) the *communicatio idiomatum*, or interchange of properties, in the relation of the divine and human in Christ, which

Luther brought from the Fathers to support his view of the Eucharist" (p. 89). That confession teaches in the clearest language the exact opposite! With the help of "Dr. Blocker's microscope (!)" we detected eight printer's errors in an otherwise well published volume.

— M. E. OSTERHAVEN

Handbook for Christian Believers, by A. J. Ungersma, New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1953. Pp. 215. \$2.75.

In this book the author sets out to define in simple, contemporary language the truths of the Christian faith. He protests that the book is not written by or for the theologian but is rather intended as a "handbook for believers who are concerned over the essentials of the faith." I approach this review as a "believer" and as such I take the liberty of a critical appraisal from the point of view of how well this book speaks to the "essentials" of my faith.

The organization of the material is refreshingly different. Dr. Ungersma begins with man from man's point of view, works up to God from man's point of view, and then back to man from God's point of view. He stays clear of the theological subtleties which often tend to confuse and obscure and brings out the importance of each truth for personal life and faith. There is, here and there throughout the book, an unusually good turn of phrase which makes one stop and ponder the truth anew. For example, "God is most like God in his gift of freedom to man. Only God would dare to give man freedom to choose the worst as well as the best" (p. 28). The technique of beginning each chapter with a personal experience related to that subject injects a note of human interest which brings the discussion down from the "ivory tower" into the reader's daily experience.

In the chapter on man, the author treats the problem of the relationship of the theory of evolution to religion. For the most part, his treatment is sane, sensible and reassuring. He points to the realities in man with which the psychologist has to deal, as strong evidence that man is more than machine and possesses consciousness of self and of moral realities. Dr. Ungersma presents an appealing and satisfying balance between human despair (in freedom) and divine activity (in election), although both the strong predestinarian and the avid Arminian may find his synthesis wanting.

Other high points in the book are the discussion of faith, which he defines as personal loyalty to God, and his treatment of the doctrine of the Trinity, which is, for Dr. Ungersma, the "distillation" and "crystallization" of the life experiences of the believer.

In spite of his criticism of Neo-orthodoxy in chapter seven, Dr. Ungersma reflects the influence of this new theological atmosphere on his own thought. His dynamic view of the human-divine relationship, God as totally Other and the eternal Subject, the existential relationship, divine confrontation, the *bis et nunc*, all of these facets of Neo-orthodox thought are readily found in the author's approach to truth. One aspect of Neo-orthodox thought which Dr. Ungersma obviously rejects is its appreciation for substitution or penal satisfaction in the atonement. I will consider this area of the author's thought a little later.

I turn now to a critical appraisal of certain views of Dr. Ungersma. That there is disagreement is, in a way, indicative of the value of the book. For the very fact that it excites reaction indicates that the book deals with vital material in a stimulating manner.

In the first chapter, the author's great appreciation of the evolutionary process leads him to say that some day we may translate the Scriptures to read "And God evolved man from the basic elements of the universe" (p. 26). This statement may cause some difficulty and misunderstanding to some of the "believers" to whom the author addresses himself. My feeling is that such a statement runs the risk of relegating God to the status of a guiding principle in an essentially extratheistic process. When taken with Dr. Ungersma's related claim that man is distinct from the animals, although he "may have evolved in a way parallel to the animal" (p. 21), this gives rise to the inevitable question, When man was not yet man, what was he? Did he, in a special process all his own, evolve from lower to higher forms or was he inanimate until the events of Genesis 2:7? Finally, can such a view of man's origin be considered creation *ex nihilo*?

In his discussion on the Word of God, the author brings up the question of the extent to which the Bible may be said to be God's Word. In the paragraph dedicated to an answer to this problem, Dr. Ungersma says "the Word of God is God speaking to us" (p. 73). He goes on to show that words are only means of communication, the ideas are the important things. He thus implies, it seems to me, that the Bible is God's Word as nearly as any words can express or communicate any idea. Later in the discussion the author repudiates any claim for inerrancy or infallibility of the Bible but he does not relate this to the former question: to what extent is the Bible the Word of God? This discussion leaves the reader without a consistent impression of the author's view of Scripture.

In a chapter entitled "Organizing Our Religious Beliefs," Dr. Ungersma makes the statement, ". . . the theology of earlier generations is not adequate for us." He goes on to substantiate this statement by referring to some fallacies in the attitudes of Christians of former days (i.e. defense of the idea that the earth is flat and defense of slavery). While I wholeheartedly agree with Dr. Ungersma's criticism of religious bigotry, I find it difficult to consider the fallacies which he mentions to be the "theology" of the Christians of that day. Rather, these prejudices resulted from a misuse of their theology and in no way reflect on the inadequacy of their basic faith. If Christian theology in any sense lays hold on ultimate truth, then it must contain a basic stability and validity for any and all generations. Indeed, Christian scholarship has for many years been striving to approach more nearly the theology of the first century of the Christian era.

Having considered a few minor points of misunderstanding or confusion, I must turn now to what I consider a major shortcoming of the book. This inadequacy is the complete lack of an objective view of the atonement. In a *Handbook for Christian Believers* which purports to deal with the essentials of faith, I cannot but feel this to be a serious lack.

As may be expected, this lack of an objective view of Christ's work affects many areas of the author's thought. Firstly, Dr. Ungersma appears to have no conception of sin as guilt. Nowhere does he consider the ideas of Original Sin or an historic Fall. He is concerned with the power and universality of sin but only in the sense of overt actuality rather than inherited guilt. Sin is merely error and affects only man's side of the divine-human relationship. "Redemption is deliverance from error, from false judgements, from failure to see the meaning of life" (p. 133). "Jesus came primarily to heal men of the sickness of soul that separates them from God" (p. 211). Under the discussion of "Our knowledge of God," Dr. Ungersma speaks at length about God's holiness as "purity and goodness" which makes God react "definitely toward sin." But

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he then compares God's wrath to a parent's sorrow for an errant child and overcomes the separation implied in God's holiness with his concept of a "loving Father" (pp. 102-103). The author feels that we overemphasize God's holiness and fail to emphasize sufficiently man's goodness (p. 100). My reaction to this is the question, Apart from the terrible wrath of God on sin, how does one account for the historical monstrosity of Calvary?

As a direct result of this view of sin the writer looks on Christ's work as totally manward. ". . . in God's divine plan the death of his only Son was necessary to pierce the hard shell of human indifference and sin" (p. 140). Elsewhere, God's purpose in sending Christ into the world is defined solely as, "that the son might demonstrate the power of good over evil" (p. 128, italics mine). I hear Christ say, "for this purpose I have come to this hour" (John 12:27), and I wonder if, viewing his death as the purpose and culmination of his incarnation, Christ meant it *only* as a further demonstration of the possibilities of human existence. The author's concept gives no real basis for the New Testament doctrine of forgiveness. Therefore, Dr. Ukersma must describe forgiveness as being "like a refreshing breeze that blows away the smog from a man's soul" (p. 162). Since forgiveness of sins is the basic significance of the sacraments, this view removes any basis for their use. The good definitions of the sacraments which the author gives on page 202 are not developed in their implications for the obvious reason that they are diametrically opposed to his view of soteriology.

With the above, the author also shows a lack of interest in any true substitutionary or vicarious significance in Christ's atonement. He does speak of "the terrific cost at which God makes human salvation possible" (p. 180); of Christ's death as a "divine mystery that is tremendous in its scope" (p. 137); and of an understanding of Christ as "not possible until we come to the cross . . ." (p. 215). However, to the all-important question as to the importance of Christ's life, he answers only

in terms of his revelation of what God is and what man can become (p. 117). The writer appears to reach a concept of vicarious suffering when he states, "In a way which human logic can never explain, Jesus accepted responsibility for a whole world's sin" (p. 141). But he shows that he does not use the word "vicarious" in even its most common denotation when he defines it as Christ's great sensitivity to shame such as we experience "because of another's shortcomings and sin." Obviously, Dr. Ukersma's view of Christ's work makes it different from all previous and subsequent revelation *only* in amount or extent. Is this redemption? Is the essence of the Christian message: Christ has revealed the way to become righteous; or, Christ has become our righteousness?

Finally, this view of the atonement destroys the value and the content of faith as we find it in the New Testament. The writer deals very briefly with justification by faith as meaning that God "for the sake of Jesus and all that he does for us," "acts toward us as though we were just as good and righteous as Jesus himself" (p. 164). Such a statement, I feel certain, is *incongruous* with a view of the atonement which has no place for substitution or penal satisfaction. What after all is the content of our faith? Is it the confidence that we can save ourselves through our own achievement of righteousness? If so, then faith itself is neither saving nor justifying. Or is our faith a whole-soul trust in God's gift of imputed righteousness made possible by Christ's substitutionary death? If I must depend on my own attainment of righteousness for assurance of salvation, however great the moral influence of Christ's life may be, I must ultimately and inevitably live and die in despair.

Lest I give the impression that the reading of this book has been, for me, devoid of value, let me hasten to say that the author has spoken to my needs at many points. His insights and helpful emphasis, especially in the first two chapters, have left a salutary impression. For this reason, I can still recommend the reading of this book to the discriminating reader.

—GARRET WILTERDINK

Seminary Highlights

This school year found the students at Western still without a building in which to meet, but they patiently went from room to room in the hallowed halls of Hope. Soon after the convocation the more normal routine began and before long we realized that Thanksgiving was past, exams were over, and a new term had started.

During the first quarter the Adelphic Society held its regular meetings with Mr. Robert Notier as our first speaker on the subject of conducting funerals. The following week Dr. Albertus Pieters, professor emeritus, spoke on the "Three Great Biblical Covenants." Since we never had a chance to sit at the feet of Dr. Pieters in the class room, we enjoyed the evening learning from him for his mind is as sharp as ever and his lecture was stimulating. Dr. Clarence De Graaf from the Hope College faculty was our next speaker on the topic of Christian Education, while the following week we listened to a panel of missionaries who were in nearby Coopersville for the Board meetings. Don DeYoung and Carl Van Farrowe were in charge of the next meeting and they talked and showed slides on their summer assignment in the East Harlem Protestant Parish. Since the local ballot carried the "option" issue, we spent an hour debating the subject just before the elections. In a straw vote Western Seminary went "dry." Paul Brooke, a converted ex-con-

vict, was our next speaker and told of his experiences. The following week we traveled to Grand Rapids and there had a joint meeting and fellowship with Calvin. After a victory in basketball, we listened to an interdenominational panel discuss "Radio Evangelism." At our last meeting, Dr. J. Harvey Kleinheksel from the college showed us his slides that he took while vacationing in Europe last summer.

Those who deserve the thanks for the meetings of the first term are the officers: Pres. Bob Bos; Vice Pres. Bob Hennings; Sec. Levi Ackr; Treas. George Muyskens; Social Chairman, Don De Young; and Athletic Director, Carl Van Farrowe. Those who will succeed them for the second term are Pres. Garret Wilterdink; Vice Pres. Bill Carlough; Sec. Bob Spencer; Treas. Wes Kiel; Social Chairman, Melvin Voss, and Jim Van Hoeven is the new Athletic Director.

There are two new groups on the campus this year. The one is a missions group composed of all those who are interested in a special way about our foreign and domestic fields. They really began last year and so far this year have had one meeting at the home of Louis Kraay at which the Rev. and Mrs. Garrett De Jong were guests. The other group discusses

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questions which have to do with the social responsibilities of the church. At their first meeting Professor Elton M. Eenigenburg lead the discussion on the biblical basis for such activities.

It seems that the U.S. Army takes a great liking to the name of "De Vries." Two of our number have left our school to serve their common Uncle in the armed forces. David De Vries and Paul De Vries are the men now wearing the uniform and until they return we ask God's blessings to go with them.

Another new feature of our seminary this year is the student council. This is a group composed of students and faculty advisors. Paul Alderink and Darrell Franken are the senior representatives, while William Hoffman and Arvin Wester, and Gerrit Boogerd and Thurman Rynbrandt represent the middlers and juniors respectively. Professors Richard C. Ouder-sluy and Lester J. Kuypers are faculty members.

We were very happy to hear that Dr. Simon Blocker's latest book *How to Achieve Personality Through Prayer* has been chosen by the CIHU Religious Book-of-the-Month Club as its May, 1955, selection. The CIHU (Can I Help U) Book Club has ordered a minimum of 5000 copies for they have received orders for that many already. Certainly we offer our heartiest congratulations to its author, our professor emeritus, and urge all our alumni and friends to read his newest work.

School is now in recess and the students have scattered far and wide to spend the holidays with families and friends. A number have become "men of letters" since they have gained employment at the local post office. President Mulder told the men at the last chapel service that very likely we would be meeting for classes in the new building by the middle of January. It will be a day for which we have long been waiting. The super-structure is now complete and work is progressing rapidly. We hope it can be dedicated debt-free.

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